

VOLTA BUREAU,
FOR THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE RELATING TO THE DEAF,
WASHINGTON CITY, U. S. A.

REPRINTS OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE,
No. 22.

The Only Method of Completely Restoring The Deaf and Dumb to Society

BY THE ABBE DE L'EPEE.

*Reprinted, by permission, from the Association
Review for February, 1900.*

PRINTING DEPARTMENT, PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTION
FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB,
MT. AIRY, PHILADELPHIA, PENN.
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THE ONLY METHOD OF COMPLETELY RESTORING THE DEAF AND DUMB TO SOCIETY.¹

The world will never learn to make eyes and fingers travel post-haste, in order to have the pleasure of conversing with the Deaf and Dumb.

The only way of totally and entirely restoring those in this predicament to society, is to teach them to understand what is said by *their sight*, and to express their own ideas and sentiments, *with their voices, (viva voce.)*

We have succeeded therein, in a great degree, with ours, altho' we did not live in the same house with them, and they came to our sessions only twice a week.

It is really nothing to say, they are capable of writing by the dictation of *viva voce*, and understand as if they heard it, I say: In other words, they *virtually hear*.

One of our Deaf and Dumb girls recites her part of the Breviary, or divine service, *viva voce*, with her landlady. She has also repeated, *viva voce*, twenty-eight chapters of the Evangelist, according to St. MATHEW. All the elder scholars make answers *viva voce*, to questions that require only a reply in the affirmative, or negative with the term of politeness, usual in such instances. They add short phrases, occasionally, such as "*I do not know,*" "*I could not,*" "*I did not see it.*"

A deaf and dumb lad replies to me, of himself, publicly, *at mass*, every day that a holyday and our day lessons happen to be the same. He maintained, in 1773, a Latin dispute, *viva voce*, according to every rule, and with the utmost propriety, upon the definition of *philosophy*; offered his arguments and proofs, and

¹"Extracts from letters of the celebrated Abbe de l'Epee, written in 1776. Translated from the French by Francis Green, Esq., of Medford. Appendix to Letter I," published in the New England Palladium, Tuesday, July 26, 1803, Vol. 22, No. 7, first page, third column, and republished in the Association Review, Vol. II, No. 1, pp. 68-69.

replied to every objection. (The themes were communicated.) In 1774 more than *eight hundred persons* heard him pronounce a Latin Discourse of four pages.

That is the point of bringing it to perfection and that would be the case infallibly, if *there were academies* devoted to this work.

At present it seems probable the first will be set up in *Germany*, by order of the Duke of *Sax Weymar*. This young Prince having been present at one of our lessons, immediately formed the design of making an establishment of this kind, and then turning himself round towards those of his suite, on the spot enquired of them, who there was among his subjects that would be a fit person for him to send into *France* to be qualified for this sort of education.

The order is given out for the month of October next.

Every other government might very well do the same, without any cost to the *state*, only by settling upon the institution *one moderate benefice*, or several smaller *church-livings*. This most certainly would not be acting contrary to the purpose and intention of the Church of Christ. For my part, I would train up, qualify and provide competent masters and mistresses, who might afterwards conduct and direct their houses of education as they should think proper. This is all I could do, it being my fixed resolution never to place myself at the head of any such house or establishment whatever. I would not refuse, however, to visit them, now and then, if it should be desired.

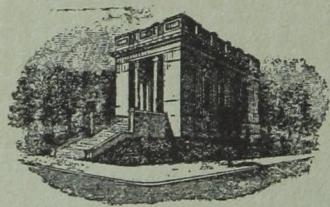
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